

ABSTRACT

Apparatus and method for notifying an Internet user of an attempted incoming telephone call to the same telephone line used to interconnect the called-but-busy party with the Internet. The disclosed embodiment comprises an Internet communication module and a message recorder/IP formatter at an Internet Service Provider (ISP). The ISP is contacted, either directly by a calling party via a telephone call, or by the central office via a telephone call, and a desired called-but-busy party is identified (e.g., with a telephone number). The ISP provides a notification message to the called-but-busy user via the data communication link established for Internet use between the called-but-busy party and their servicing ISP. The notification message may be textual (e.g., an e-mail message) and/or audible (e.g., a ".wav" file attached to an e-mail message). Moreover, the notification message may be passive, requiring the called-but-busy party to actively receive the notification request, e.g., by retrieving their e-mail. Alternatively, the notification message may be automatically activated upon receipt by the called-but-busy Internet user, e.g., using a self-executing JAVA applet or the like.

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